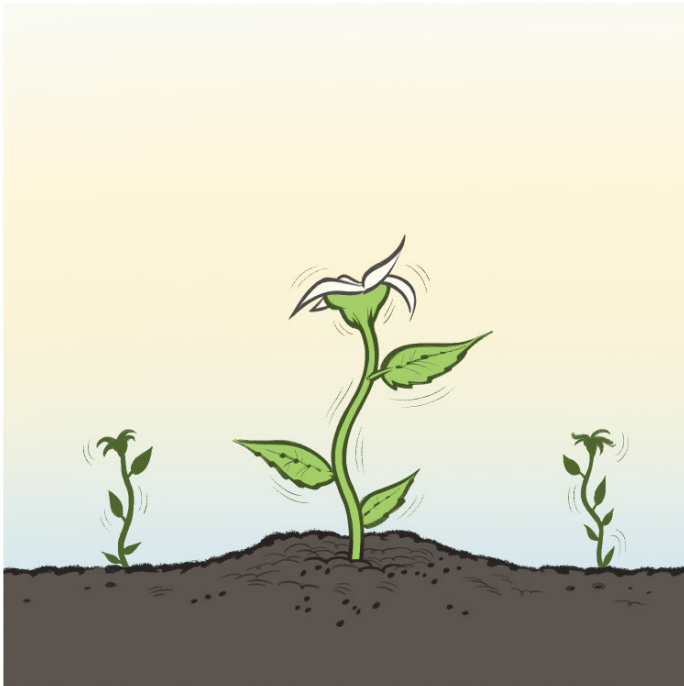


Speaking Volumes



Promoting Growth, Planting New Ideas





A Unifying Voice

BY MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS STAFF,
UT LIBRARIES

In 1960, the University of Tennessee Libraries published the first *Library Development Report* celebrating private support of the libraries and recording notable additions to our collections. Over the years, our annual publication focused particularly on extraordinary gifts of papers, manuscripts, and rare books. In the 2000s, the renamed *Library Development Review* evolved into a sleeker full-color magazine with lots of stories about programming and spaces that serve students. The first issue that followed the start of the global pandemic—bound in a cover that bore no title—focused on the UT Libraries’ response to the COVID-19 crisis. We are ready to turn the page!

Welcome to *Speaking Volumes*. Our renamed print publication will bring you varied content about people, spaces, collections, and scholarship. The unifying theme is how the UT Libraries impacts and transforms lives through a shared commitment to discovery, creativity, learning, and engagement. Stories from the physical magazine will live on a website of the same name (volumes.lib.utk.edu/features).

The concept of organic unity as it relates to narrative was first put forth by Plato in *The Republic* and later clarified by Aristotle in Part 8 of his *Poetics* as “a complete whole, with its several incidents so closely connected that the transposal or withdrawal of any one of them will disjoin and dislocate the whole.” It is with Aristotle’s view of the narrative form in mind that we begin this new narrative journey, treating our news site, our e-newsletter to donors and friends, and this annual publication you have come to know (and, we hope, love) as interconnected parts of a larger whole.

Speaking Volumes will thus become a year-round resource allowing UT Libraries staff, faculty, and administrators to showcase their work and explain resources, events, and other topics to a broad audience.

By rebranding this longstanding publication, we hope to remind ourselves and our audience of the importance of a unified narrative, ensuring that our audiences are well informed and that we are, in fact, *speaking volumes*.



THE UNIVERSITY
OF TENNESSEE
LIBRARY
DEVELOPMENT
REVIEW
2018-2019





Grace Nystrom, with Volunteer Puppy Partners, studies with Cooper, a Smoky Mountain Service Dog, inside Hodges Library. (Photo by Steven Bridges, University of Tennessee)

Speaking Volumes

UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE LIBRARIES

No. 1 SPRING 2024

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2023 IN REVIEW



A Functional Reorganization

A M E S S A G E F R O M T H E D E A N S

We are excited to share some new ways in which the University Libraries is contributing to the university's research and teaching mission. Aligning with the university's new strategic vision, teams within the libraries worked for over a year on developing goals in support of strategic areas pertaining to impactful research, student success, nimbleness, and our values as a land-grant university. Those teams recommended functional alignment with campus strategic directions and pointed out the need for ensuring employee wellness, workload balance, and sustainability in library practices. Conversations with campus and system leadership

specifically recommended alignment with new campus priorities for teaching and research.

We heard from campus leaders about new directions in teaching and research that demand forward-thinking measures by the libraries. Increasingly, the modern land-grant university must deliver learning in online and hybrid learning environments. In addition, today's students expect dynamic and immersive learning that might, for instance, incorporate gaming or virtual reality. Faculty researchers, too, have new expectations. The growth of transdisciplinary research means changing roles for library faculty.

In addition to discipline-specific knowledge, there is a need for more in-depth ongoing support throughout the research process. And librarians must be nimble enough to support the needs of students in emerging and cross-disciplinary fields.

Our strategic planning resulted in a new organizational alignment with team-based support for the university's evolving priorities. The libraries' new alignment pairs deep subject knowledge with expertise in data usage, scholarly communications, evidence-based synthesis (through systematic literature review), open access, digital scholarship, and

immersive learning. With those changes, the University Libraries is poised to lead the campus in offering online and immersive learning experiences, contributing to research impact, advancing new directions in scholarship, and creating sustainable practices.

To help meet these goals, the University Libraries has added five new departments. The new departments all emphasize a team-based approach to supporting the needs of the Volunteer community:

The newly organized Arts and Humanities Department serves as a bridge between the humanities and the performing and visual arts. The team provides research and curricular support to the campus community, with primary emphasis on the Arts and Humanities Division of the College of Arts and Sciences and on the College of Music. Team members provide support through research consultations on designing search strategies for literature reviews and other research projects and translating search strategies across humanities- and arts-related databases. The team contributes to curricular design and instruction for students in person and online, and provides outreach to engage the Volunteer community with library resources in support of arts and humanities.

Faculty and staff in the Data and Digital Scholarship Department assist with data needs across all disciplines. They consult on the discovery, management, use, and visualization of data. Connecting scholars to software, tools, programs, and languages for working with data, the team supports them in creating rich experiences for people interacting with their data and scholarship. Consulting and instructional services help ensure that data is understood contextually, presented clearly, and preserved for future use.

The Health and Wellness Department provides academic units with research and curricular support encompassing various aspects of health and wellness. The team understands and contributes to transdisciplinary research endeavors related to health outcomes in people, animals, plants, and their shared environment. Health and wellness librarians assist with designing search strategies for literature reviews, evidence-based practice projects, and knowledge synthesis reviews. They are available for translating search strategies across relevant databases and using citation management and systematic review screening tools, among other services.

The Immersive Spaces and Technologies Department provides expertise and support for technology-rich services in Hodges Library, including The Studio media and design lab, Medbery Makerspace, a gaming and esports lab, and a virtual reality room. The team supports research and curricula in innovative academic and professional programs in the College of Communication and Information, the Haslam



STEVE SMITH

BRUCE AND NANCY SULLIVAN DEAN
OF UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES AND THE
UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE PRESS



HOLLY MERCER

SENIOR ASSOCIATE DEAN OF LIBRARIES



TERESA WALKER
ASSOCIATE DEAN OF LIBRARIES



ELIZABETH GREENE
ASSOCIATE DEAN OF LIBRARIES

College of Business, and the College of Architecture and Design. They assist with the production, editing, and design of media projects and provide instruction in media literacy. The department offers makerspace technologies and tools for 3D printing, sewing, crafting, gaming, and other activities. They help library users from all disciplines and skill levels take their projects from idea to prototype.

The Research Impact and Open Access Department works with scholars in all disciplines to communicate the value of research and scholarship. The team assists with understanding journal-, researcher-, and article-level metrics as well as alternative metrics that show research impact beyond publication. They connect researchers to knowledge and resources to help them make informed decisions about their rights as authors and how participating in open access scholarship can further the impact of their scholarship and ensure broad access to research.

These new teams work closely with existing library departments dedicated to providing stellar collections and assisting researchers as they discover and use information. We are the heart of campus and a 24-hour hub for intellectual activity. We have spaces, collections, people, tools, and technologies to inspire learning, research, and innovation. Our goal is to support the teaching, research, and service mission of the university and, in doing so, to enhance the academic experience of students and deepen and extend the university's connection to Tennesseans and the world.

As part of its 10-year accreditation process, the university will launch a new Quality Enhancement Plan, a campus-wide initiative for enhancing student learning. The libraries' new vision and restructured organization are in perfect alignment with the QEP goal of building a strong web of social connections within and outside the classroom to help students thrive at UT and beyond.

Visit us at Hodges Library, DeVine Music Library, or Pendergrass Agriculture and Veterinary Medicine Library, or use our collections and services online at lib.utk.edu. We invite you to learn more about the libraries' strategic vision and the ways the University Libraries can support you!

Student Engagement



Students in the Summer Bridge Program (Photo by Camren Murray, UT Department of History)

Summer Bridge: Entrée to Graduate History Programs

BY SHAINA ANDERSON

The 2022–23 academic year marked the second year for the University of Tennessee’s Summer Bridge Program, administered by the Department of History to provide resources, mentoring, and support to students from historically excluded and underrepresented backgrounds who are interested in pursuing a graduate degree in history. Upper-division history majors, recent graduates, and master’s degree graduates from any college or university are invited to apply, as well as those in history-adjacent majors such as Africana studies and Latin American studies. The Department of History covers all costs for travel, meals,

and accommodation, and offers participants a \$250 stipend.

The program offers a series of workshops that introduce students to the expectations of history graduate programs, and it encourages students to imagine themselves working in careers in and beyond academia. Workshops focus on such topics as career options, networking, developing a research agenda, and the application process. Students leave the program with an academic network, faculty mentors, and new skills that make them better prepared for the graduate application process. Summer Bridge has drawn participants from academic

institutions throughout Tennessee and in Iowa, Kentucky, Louisiana, North Carolina, Ohio, Texas, and Virginia.

Last year, the two faculty members in charge of the program—Professors Sara Ritchey and Brandon Winford—enlisted me, as the subject specialist librarian for history, to instruct students in the use of the UT Libraries’ databases and other digital resources. After receiving high praise and positive feedback on those efforts, Ritchey and Winford invited me to join the planning committee and serve as a consultant on the research sections of the program. The new position enabled me to structure

the research sections to be more accessible by using instructional scaffolding strategies, which break up information into manageable parts with each unit building on the the preceding lesson. I restructured not only my own sessions but the program's entire curriculum.

This year's Summer Bridge Program received even better feedback than last year's. One question on the exit survey asked how to improve the program, and the unanimous response was that participants wanted more time in the library with the history librarian.

This year, my sessions included "Thinking about Your Research Interests," in which I guided students through a process of following their

interests to discover research topics. A group activity led students through what they knew about their proposed topics and what they would like to research. The students liked having an opportunity to get their thoughts on paper and exchange ideas with other participants from different educational backgrounds. By the time they met with the history faculty later that day, they were much more confident about talking through their proposed research topics.

My second session was "Library Resources: What Are They For and How Can They Help You?" It assisted the participants—who by this time had a firmer grasp on their research topics—in understanding how to use UT Libraries' resources to start and continue their research. I ran

sample searches in the databases so students could observe and ask questions.

For next year, the planning committee plans to incorporate even more library time and instruction. Other possibilities under exploration include expanding the program to reach students in more states and instituting peer mentorships.

Learn more about the Summer Bridge Program at tiny.utk.edu/HistoryBridge.

Engaging with CCI Students

BY CALANTHA TILLOTSON



Librarian Calantha Tillotson, far right, with CCI students in Washington, DC

As the subject librarian for the College of Communication and Information, I hold outreach as my foremost priority. Each time I step into CCI's space, I get a chance to create connections with my faculty, staff, and students as individuals and gain understanding of their academic fields.

One invaluable engagement opportunity occurred when several information sciences graduate student leaders co-crafted a series of events with me, called Coffee with Calantha. We meet to drink comforting cups of coffee and openly discuss challenges in librarianship—conversations that will help prepare them to work in the

field after graduation. Topics requested so far have included navigating academic librarianship, job seeking, vocational awe, and burnout.

Similarly, I co-chaperoned a student trip to Washington, DC, at the request of a CCI faculty member. The trip provided me with serendipitous interactions with students and faculty in advertising and public relations and in journalism and media. I also gathered deeper insight into the research skills and tools needed in those professions. Both Coffee with Calantha and the DC trip were unique steps in my effort to be an effectively embedded subject librarian!



CCI students outside the US Capitol

Library Events Boost Student Success

BY ALEX BORIS

UT Libraries values reaching students across campus and supporting them in various ways. Recognizing that a sense of belonging is as critical to student success as library research skills, UT Libraries hosts programs and events that promote engagement with the campus community.

Some events like DeStress for Success, Writing Blitz, and the International Coffeehouse are staples to students, while others are created yearly—for example, the Devine Music Library's Tiny Desk Concert, a takeoff on National Public Radio's intimate concert series presented in partnership with the Black Musicians Alliance.

The libraries even reach out to the broader community with programs like the Ready for the World Music Series and Big Orange STEM Saturday, a hands-on conference where local high school students come to the library to experience what we have to offer and receive encouragement to pursue STEM fields.



Students serve snacks at the International Coffeehouse: Nigeria in the Mary Greer Room of Hodges Library.



Hundreds of students joined Dean of Libraries Steve Smith and UT Vice Provost for Student Success Amber Williams for a late-night breakfast at Hodges Library during final exams.



Students take part in the short story writing contest in November, hosted by UT Libraries and the Judith Anderson Herbert Writing Center, in honor of National Novel Writing Month.

UT Libraries continues to grow successful programs to engage with students. For example, the Writing Blitz paper writing marathon, co-sponsored with the Judith Anderson Herbert Writing Center, was held at both Hodges Library and Pendergrass Library this year. This expansion aims to reach students where they are most comfortable studying and help them gain confidence in their writing.

The library reaches even further by offering events connected to other institutions across the nation, such as *Care and Custody: Past Responses to Mental Health*, a traveling exhibition from the National Library of Medicine. Throughout November there were speakers, conversations, and displays geared toward educating students on the importance of mental health and ways that the past influences how we view mental health conditions today.

Whether it is an event like the National Novel Writing Month Short Story Contest that fosters students' talents, or one like the International Coffeehouse that immerses them into a different culture, UT Libraries champions student success as one of its core principles.



Student creations during DeStress for Success



Documentary filmmaker Ashley York, left, chats with UT's Elaine McMillion Sheldon during the Wilma Dykeman Stokely Memorial Lecture. (Photos by Shelly O'Barr, UT Libraries)

Library Events Nurture a Sense of Place

BY MARTHA RUDOLPH

Anyone who attended the UT Libraries' public events during the 2022–23 academic year would have come away with an enhanced sense of place.

First on the libraries' calendar of fall events was a discussion of University of Tennessee history. In 2022, the University of Tennessee Press published *Bearing the Torch: The University of Tennessee, 1794–2010* by T. R. C. Hutton, the first book-length scholarly history of the university to be published in over 30 years. The UT Libraries, the Knoxville History Project, and the East Tennessee Historical Society hosted a conversation between author Bob Hutton and local historian Jack Neely at the East Tennessee History Center.

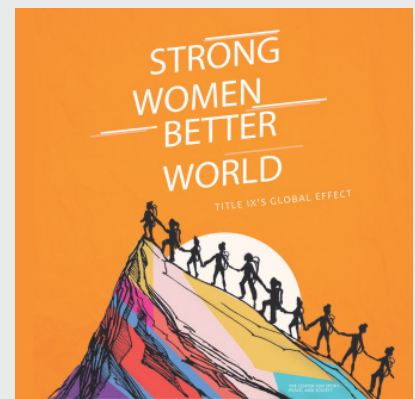
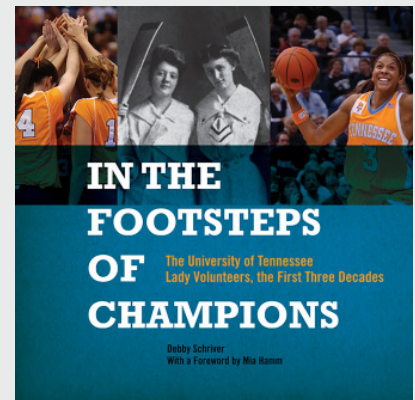
UT began as a small school for the privileged elite, founded by Presbyterian minister Samuel Carrick two years before Tennessee became a state. The university celebrated its 225th anniversary in 2019. But the trajectory from its founding in 1794 to its current status as an eminent public research university was far from unbroken. At various times the institution was nearly derailed by squabbling among the trustees, by the Civil War, and even by religious sectarianism.

In fall 2022, UT Libraries marked the 50th anniversary of Title IX—the law enacted by Congress in 1972 that prohibits sex-based discrimination in any education program that receives funding from the federal government. The libraries hosted a panel discussion among three UT Press authors whose books address the impact of Title IX and the power of sports to change women's lives.

Debby Schriver, author of *In the Footsteps of Champions: The University of Tennessee Lady Volunteers, the First Three Decades*, noted Title IX's unanticipated consequences. The bill addressed equity in educational programs, and no one expected it to lead to a revolution in women's sports.

Mary Ellen Pethel, author of *Title IX, Pat Summitt, and Tennessee's Trailblazers: 50 Years, 50 Stories*, spoke about the diplomatic skills demanded of trailblazers in women's sports. "On the one hand, they had to show that women's athletics were not going to challenge men's sports or compete with men's sports. But on the other, they had to show that women's sports were worthy of respect and recognition." Thanks to Pat Summitt and many other trailblazers, Tennessee became a national leader in advancing women's sports.

Sarah Hillyer, director of UT's Center for Sport, Peace, and Society and a contributor to *Strong Women, Better World: Title IX's Global Effect*, talked about the power of sport to transform lives and communities around the world.



The Wilma Dykeman Stokely Memorial Lecture is hosted annually by the Friends of the Knox County Public Library and the John C. Hodges Society of the University of Tennessee Libraries. The 2023 lecture featured documentary filmmakers Ashley York and Elaine McMillion Sheldon—also an assistant professor in the School of Art—discussing York’s film *Hillbilly*. The film contrasts stereotypes of

Appalachia with the complicated realities of the region.

To challenge those stereotypes, *Hillbilly* uses a combination of personal narrative, regional history, and conversations with Appalachian residents—including York’s own grandmother. York contrasted her empathetic treatment of the region with the typical documentary

approach to Appalachia, which, as she stated, “comes from a tradition of gawking.” In making the film, York felt that she needed to step away from the accepted journalistic ethics that dictate arms-length reportage. “Really the demand of the film required that I step up and say ‘I am from this place.’”

Singer-songwriter Maggie Longmire was the featured artist at the UT Libraries’ unique series *Boundless: Artists in the Archives* in spring 2023. Longmire’s original ballads of Tennessee coal country spoke of the hard lives of coal miners and their families, and a hoped-for end to our reliance on fossil fuels.

Boundless invites musicians and other artists to visit the libraries’ archives and create original works inspired by what they discover there. Longmire was drawn to resources that chronicle life in East Tennessee coal mining communities at the turn of the 20th century. For Longmire, who grew up in LaFollette, Tennessee, and is the descendant of a coal-mining family, *Boundless* was an opportunity to revisit Campbell County history. In particular, she wanted to honor the spirit of strong women like her great-grandmother who, despite many hardships, uplift the lives of others.

Recordings of the original compositions that Longmire created for *Boundless: Artists in the Archives* are available at volumes.lib.utk.edu/boundless alongside the works of earlier *Boundless* artists.

In film, song, and the written word, UT Libraries events celebrated Tennessee’s history and cultural heritage.



From left: Sarah Hillyer, Mary Ellen Pethel, and Debbie Schriver hold their respective books.

Singer-songwriter Maggie Longmire





THE
Maria Edgeworth
LETTERS PROJECT

Producing Digital
Scholarship through
Institutional Collaboration

BY MEREDITH HALE AND HILARY HAVENS

Maria Edgeworth by
John Downman, 1807

Maria Edgeworth (1768–1849) was an Anglo-Irish Regency author known for her novels and children’s literature. Her correspondence (an estimated 10,000 extant letters in archives, institutions, and private collections worldwide) offers insights into a wide variety of topics including science, politics, and the lives and works of contemporary authors.

The University of Tennessee Libraries and the Z. Smith Reynolds Library at Wake Forest University are collaborating with professors of English at UT, Wake Forest, Texas A&M University, and Xavier University of Louisiana to create a comprehensive open-access digital archive of Edgeworth’s correspondence. The collaboration, known as the Maria Edgeworth Letters Project, is working to make available digital images of the letters alongside transcriptions.

The idea for the project emerged in 2016, during the Doing Edgeworth Studies roundtable at the American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies conference. Several members of the current project team attended the roundtable, including Susan Egenolf of Texas A&M, Hilary Havens of UT, Jessica Richard of Wake Forest, and Robin Runia of Xavier. Following a presentation by Runia, Havens identified the need for a complete scholarly edition of Edgeworth’s letters and Richard proposed a digital environment as the only feasible venue for such a sprawling project.

Chelcie Rowell, digital initiatives librarian at Reynolds Library through the project’s first months, began to imagine how to structure the project. After Rowell’s departure at the end of 2016, her role was taken over by Assistant Professor of English and Digital Humanities Research Designer Carrie Johnston.

Wake Forest established a website at mariaedgeworth.org to share the project’s goals and initial work with a wider audience.



Maria Edgeworth, engraving from original painting by Alonzo Chappel, 1872–73

With the advent of the pandemic in 2020, the editors, aided by the robust participation of library faculty at Wake Forest, began regular virtual meetings. In spring 2021, Meredith Hale of UT Libraries joined the project to advise on metadata, encoding, and linked open data.

Both Reynolds Library and the UT Libraries have been key in creating metadata (that is, descriptive data about the letters and their structure) and establishing workflows to complete that descriptive work. While its importance is sometimes overlooked, metadata enables users to find content of interest

on search platforms. At Reynolds Library, Johnston and Heather Barnes supervised file naming and management of the digital scans of the letters. They created basic metadata for each letter, including a title, author, recipient, date, length, and holding institution.

At UT Libraries, Hale led the development of files that established identifiers for persons, places, and written works mentioned in Edgeworth’s letters. The files allow users to find all mentions of a particular entity across the letters, regardless of variations in naming.

Following the guidelines of the Text Encoding Initiative, an international consortium that develops and maintains standards for the digital representation of texts, the project files consist of a personography (listing persons), a placeography (listing places), and a workography (listing written works). The three files are informally referred to as “the ographies.”

The identifiers tag text referring to each entity within the letters. For instance, whether the author Walter Scott is mentioned as “Sir W. Scott” or another variation, the identifier brings together all the letters in which he is mentioned. This collocation greatly assists researchers with finding relevant content and digging deeper into the texts. While personography and placeography files are common in Text Encoding Initiative projects, the Maria Edgeworth Letters Project’s workography file is arguably the first of its kind.

Edgeworth’s letters provide an essential view of British and Irish life at the turn of the 19th century and touch on a wide variety of topics including science, gender,

family, politics, education, religion, and abolitionism. For example, an 1819 letter from Edgeworth to her stepmother, Frances, includes relationship advice as well as a passage on French exploding bullets. Edgeworth meticulously describes the experiment and includes small diagrams that demonstrate her more than casual interest in scientific topics. Within the same letter, Edgeworth shares the humorous words of her relative Mrs. Sneyd regarding the proper distribution of gravy on meat: “Not well bred ever you know to put the gravy on the meat when you help any body—No because you sh^d leave the persons at liberty to eat it or not as they please.”

As of the start of the 2023–24 academic year, several milestones have been

reached toward fulfilling a National Endowment for the Humanities grant-funded pilot project. Most significantly, 744 of Edgeworth’s letters hosted on the Zooniverse platform have been transcribed by volunteers. Several transcribe-a-thon events were organized to help achieve that total.

One such event was held in April 2023 as part of the Interdisciplinary Nineteenth Century Studies conference. Led by Havens, the transcribe-a-thon received additional support from UT Libraries through the loaning of laptops and sharing of log-in credentials for visiting scholars. Digital Scholarship Librarian Joshua Ortiz Baco volunteered at the event to help attendees transcribe Edgeworth’s letters.

Research assistants have been working to add structure to this raw text by encoding the letters using the Text Encoding Initiative guidelines. Approximately 187 letters have been encoded so far, with the aim of finishing 200 letters by April 2024.

Many hands have been involved in transforming Edgeworth’s letters into structured data. The Maria Edgeworth Letters Project team is looking forward to sharing Edgeworth’s correspondence through an open-access database in the future.

The development of the Maria Edgeworth Letters Project has been supported by a Humanities Collections and Reference Resources–Foundations grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities and internal grants from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville; Wake Forest University; Texas A&M University; and Xavier University of Louisiana. The internal grants from UT Knoxville include funding from the Humanities Center, the Department of English, UT Libraries, two summer graduate research assistantships, and a College Award for New Research in the Arts and Humanities.



Digital Scholarship Librarian Joshua Ortiz Baco (at front) assists at a transcribe-a-thon held at the Interdisciplinary Nineteenth Century Studies conference hosted by UT in April 2023.

My aunt Mary was all this
time turning over the letter
copy of verses I wrote yesterday
and knitting a garter for me
& listening to me consulting
about the insertion or omission
of one of Mr. Day's letters in my
father's life — Aunt Charlotte
writing a letter — & then making
me dictate to her a charade
which Anna gave me & which
I believe I sent you on Car-mine

— Luncheon & a bowl of
pasta for Mr. & Mrs. Grey's panten

Luncheon — damson pie —
pork pie — cold — mutton steaks — hot
mashed potatoes & — puffs — unno-
ticed — brown untouched — cold
roast beef on sideboard — seen
too late! — by Mr. & Mrs. G

Observation — Not well bread & ever
you know to put the gravy
on the meat when you help any
body — No because you sh^d
leave the persons at liberty to eat
it or not as they please —

— Just like butter on & off
vegetables — it should be —
Yes Just like love — which you
should be allowed to take or leave

From Seed

Partnership Addresses Campus Food Insecurity and

BY LOLA ALAPO

On a sunny morning, students in Amanda Spangler's plant sciences class nestle broccoli, cabbage, and swiss chard seedlings into the rich soil of raised concrete beds at UT's Grow Lab. They pat the soil around the tender shoots and water them before moving on to plant the next row.

The seedlings, many grown from seed packets obtained through UT Libraries, will become a harvest that addresses food access issues on campus, enhances student experiential learning, and empowers students to lead healthier, more sustainable lifestyles.

Eventually the produce is delivered to the Big Orange Pantry, a campus resource for those in need of food support. From there it will make its way to the pots and plates of students, faculty, and staff.

"Food insecurity is a huge thing for students here," said Spangler, a lecturer in the Department of Plant Sciences. "Forgoing an opportunity to earn an income so that you can be a student, it can be really difficult to make ends meet—much less get healthy food and vegetables."

Giuliana Castillo, right, UT student and student manager of the Grow Lab, with a volunteer from the UT Office of Sustainability (Photos by Shelly O'Barr, UT Libraries)



d to Pantry

Enhances Student Experiential Learning



Growing Interest

The idea to partner with the Seed Library sprouted during Spangler's meeting with Samantha Ward, director of the Pendergrass Agriculture and Veterinary Medicine Library.

UT Libraries has been a key partner in supporting student basic needs in profound ways, from providing a welcoming space for all students to being a hub of exceptional service, friendliness, and community.

Addressing food insecurity is a natural extension of that mission.

"We understand the connection between basic needs and success," Ward said. "It is imperative that basic needs are met if we expect students

to succeed in the classroom. It's not just the narrowest definition of providing information in the academic sense. We want to serve their whole being."

The Seed Library, established in 2018, offers free vegetable, herb, fruit, and flower seed packets along with information about gardening activities. The seed packets, housed in vintage card catalogs, are available at Pendergrass and Hodges Libraries.

In the spring and fall, students in Spangler's 200- and 400-level courses use the Seed Library as part of their hands-on learning. They experience growing a crop from seed to harvest and expand their knowledge about unique seeds and varieties—expensive items typically highlighted in trendy seed catalogs.

Connecting students to the Seed Library gives them agency: they pick what they will grow. This gives them a better understanding of the food they're eating.

"There's a disconnect when you go pick up something at a grocery store. It's so easy and accessible, you don't fully appreciate all the work it involves. Hopefully, getting experience growing these crops from seed to harvest they have a better appreciation of what goes into it," Spangler said.

The students are turning their love of food into making a difference. They're excited about growing food, eating it, and feeding people.

"It's not just a garden for garden's sake," she said.

*"It's not just a garden
for garden's sake."*

AMANDA SPANGLER



For Giuliana Castillo, a senior in economics with a minor in plant sciences, learning about varieties of seeds, tending plots, and harvesting the produce are fulfilling. She enrolled in Spangler's fall Fruit and Vegetable Crops course to discover more about vegetable production and the scientific thinking behind crop care.

"I really enjoy it. It feels very good to know that all the things I produce are being consumed for free. If it came out of the ground, why put a price on it?" said Castillo, who serves as the student manager of the Grow Lab, an initiative of the UT Office of Sustainability.

Castillo harvests the crops several times a week and delivers them to the Big Orange Pantry.

'Every Herb under the Sun'

The types of seeds available in the Seed Library are seasonal and intentional, said Ward.

"We try to be thoughtful about the environment that our students are living in, so we try to have pot-friendly things that are suitable for an apartment or patio," she said.

Flower seeds are abundant, along with vegetables like peppers, spinach, brussels sprouts, tomatoes, different kinds of squash, and "almost every herb under the sun."

Pendergrass has expanded its collection of seeds to represent different palates around the world. Offerings now include seeds for foods like bok choy and mizuna along with herbs like fenugreek.

As a result, the diversity of produce that ends up at the Big Orange Pantry is impactful for a lot of UT's international students, according to Brianna Smith, coordinator for basic needs operations for the Office of the Dean of Students, which operates the pantry.





"It allows them to create food as if they were home," she said. "We try to give them that sense of self rather than just the American classics."

The herbs are helpful as they can be expensive at the grocery store, Smith said, and donated herbs allow the pantry to use its resources to purchase other items.

The Big Orange Pantry points its clients back to the Seed Library, which brings the partnership full circle.

"We encourage students to start planting themselves and create

an urban garden, so it adds that sustainability element," Smith said.

The Seed Library packets are portioned in a way that doesn't overwhelm students.

"That way, students don't feel so bad about taking lots of different things to experiment with. And they're not wasting seeds," said Spangler.

The hands-on experience of planting, watering, and harvesting can be the decisive point in students making it a lifelong practice.

"I really enjoy using the Seed Library

and Grow Lab in my classes," Spangler said. "The purpose of these resources is to empower students outside class. Sometimes it's a little easier to get started when they're part of a group. Hopefully everyone will be using these resources—because they're awesome."

Big Orange Pocket Pantry Opens at Pendergrass Library

BY LOLA ALAPO

A new Big Orange Pocket Pantry opened in fall 2023 at Pendergrass Library.

The pantry is an extension of UT's main Big Orange Pantry, which provides food and hygiene essentials to students, faculty, and staff.

UT Libraries staff donated items to stock the Pendergrass pantry ahead of its opening.

The Pendergrass pantry allows the dean of student's Center for Basic Needs to extend its service to students on the Institute of Agriculture campus.

"One of the things about the ag campus is that students don't have a lot of food options for lunch and dinner," said Brianna Smith, coordinator for basic needs operations. "When you're hungry, it's hard to focus. We're so excited that students will be able to access the food when they need to."

Two other pocket pantry locations opened in the fall—one inside the UT Free Store and a basic needs vending machine at TRECS, the Tennessee Recreation Center for Students.

Pendergrass Library Director Samantha Ward with Blake Weiss, UT Program Director for Basic Needs, during the ribbon cutting of the Pocket Pantry at Pendergrass





Vol is a Verb:

Cultivating Accessible Learning Environments

BY LEIGH MOSLEY

UT Libraries owns or subscribes to more than a million electronic books and almost 750 electronic databases of journals, videos, newspapers, and other media. And we are committed to making those resources available to every member of the campus community.

In 2017 the University of Tennessee approved a system-wide policy directing that all technology adopted

by the university be accessible to individuals with disabilities. The new policy reflected the requirements of a multitude of state and federal laws, such as the Americans with Disabilities Act, as well as the reality of a legal landscape that had witnessed successful lawsuits against prominent universities for providing videos without captioning or library resources that could not be read by screen-reader software.

By 2019 the libraries' leadership was beginning to realize the implications of this new accessibility mandate. How would the libraries ensure that users with a wide range of challenges have fair access to resources purchased with their tuition dollars?

Enter the libraries' first accessibility coordinator! I was hired in 2022 to systematically assess the libraries' electronic resources, with new

purchases as my highest priority. My approach includes collecting mandatory digital accessibility documentation from the publishers and doing some high-level testing of my own. I work to make sure the information contained in our library resources can be used by everyone, including those with low or no vision who may rely on screen-reading software or screen magnifiers, those who are deaf or hard of hearing and may need audio captioning, those with mobility impairments who cannot use a mouse, and those who are neurodivergent.

The last is an extremely loose category that includes people who may have a learning or reading disorder that is exacerbated by overly busy interfaces, walls of text, unexpected audio or moving content on their screens, or websites that are confusing to navigate.

National statistics show that neurodivergent students make up the fastest-growing category of students with documented disabilities at US universities. In the most recent National Center for Education Statistics report, 19 percent of all US undergraduates and 12 percent of graduate students reported having a disability of some type. Of those, about half fell under one of three categories: autism spectrum disorders, ADHD or ADD, or “specific learning disabilities,” which includes diagnoses such as dyslexia. Campus numbers recently released by the student disability offices at North Carolina State University and Colorado State University show even higher ratios of students with information-processing issues compared to physical impairments.

In a survey of UT Knoxville students I conducted last spring to learn about

the use of assistive technologies, 41 percent of respondents said they commonly rely on text-to-speech software when conducting library research. Text-to-speech software includes anything from the Siri on your iPhone to a thousand-dollar piece of software like JAWS that not only reads a computer screen aloud but also converts the text to braille.

Text-to-speech and screen-reader programs are tremendously useful for people who are physically unable to see the words on the screen, but they are also often used by those with normal vision who struggle to cognitively decode printed text. Many people with dyslexia who have difficulties with visual processing can often make sense of information presented in an audio format (such as via text-to-speech software) much more quickly and with better retention than they would by merely



Assistive Technology Room in Hodges Library

reading the printed words. There is potentially a large and diverse audience for library resources that lend themselves to being read aloud by software.

Users may also benefit from the ability to change the appearance of what they are reading, such as altering the colors of the background or the text (a practice reported by 29 percent of my survey respondents).

Someone with poor vision, for example, might want to maximize the color contrast between the text and the background of the page. For others, black text on a bright white background can cause eye strain and headaches.

In all these situations, the ability to enable reading aloud or customize a screen display requires library resources that offer real text—that is,

text that can be selected, highlighted, and copied rather than appearing as part of an image like a picture of a newspaper page or a complex illustration. There are other reasons to prioritize the use of real text when evaluating library resources for accessibility: it can be greatly magnified without becoming blurry or pixelated, it can be indexed by search engines, and translation apps can convert it to other languages.



Alicia Pitts walking outside with her cane for a Student Disability Services photoshoot (Photo by Steven Bridges, University of Tennessee)

Cluttered, busy interfaces can be another big obstacle to comprehension for anyone who is easily sidetracked or struggles to concentrate. Of my survey respondents, 41 percent reported a reliance on software or browser extensions that limit distractions and encourage mental focus when using online library resources. This category encompasses a wide variety of digital solutions. Many

eliminate visual distractions by removing on-screen advertisements or other extraneous elements and streamlining the primary content—often into a single column of text and graphics that can be navigated sequentially. Screen-masking software can even limit what is visible on the page to a single line of text at a time, if that helps the user visually track their reading from one line to the next.

Images of text, complex graphics, lack of captions, confusing interfaces—these issues and others need to be documented for our own records as well as to inform our contract negotiations with publishers. Publishers need to be made aware of accessibility issues with their products and to agree on a timeline for correcting these problems.

In the meantime, we add accessibility notes that are visible to users searching the collection. For example, in OneSearch—our online catalog—the record for a certain journal might include a comment advising screen-reader users to contact the libraries if they need an article in a different format that their device can read aloud. Or the item record might direct a user who is unable to operate a mouse to avoid a particular browser. We check back with publishers on a scheduled basis to see if they have kept their promises and eliminated the identified accessibility barriers. It's not a quick or simple process, but the outcome is very rewarding. And the benefits go beyond the goal of simply making the university more inclusive. With instruction and research increasingly moving to electronic platforms, all library users benefit from these efforts.

As a growing number of academic libraries across the country begin to proactively examine their collections and give serious consideration to digital accessibility, more and more students will be able to independently manage their own online schoolwork and research. The libraries' digital accessibility practices are just one example of how the University of Tennessee is leading the way for many of its peer institutions.



Collection Check-Up:

Some Practices for Long-Term Health

Maintaining a healthy academic library collection is crucial to meeting the ever-evolving needs of users. Just as humans require regular exercise, a balanced diet, good hygiene, and medical screenings, a library collection requires constant attention and adaptation. At the University of Tennessee Libraries, we have implemented several practices to guard our collection's long-term health. Here are some of the strategies we have employed over the past year in preparation for the soon-to-be-built Library Storage Annex and for overall collection vitality and effectiveness.

Understanding Collection Strengths

UT's libraries collectively hold more than 2.5 million books and print items. With a collection of that size, it can sometimes be difficult to anticipate potential problems and implement large-scale solutions. Generally projects are broken down into smaller chunks of the collection, targeting one area of study or one branch library at a time.

To support the addition of the new Library Storage Annex, UT Libraries is using a tool called GreenGlass to learn more about our collection and its strengths. GreenGlass creates graphs,

Humanities Librarian Louisa Trott tests reels of acetate film for vinegar syndrome, an important film preservation practice. Acid-detecting strips—think of pH strips from chemistry class—are placed inside film canisters for at least two days. The strip's color will change from blue to green to yellow, depending on the extent of vinegar syndrome.

BY KAT BROOKS, LIZZIE COPE, TYLER MARTINDALE,
JENNIE MEZICK, AND GAIL WILLIAMS

charts, and other visualizations that allow us to understand how different areas are used, the breadth of our collection, and how we compare to other libraries nationwide. This analytics-based approach empowers us to make informed decisions about selections, deselections, and retention that support our world-class collection.

Informed Book Selections

We are preparing for the addition of the storage annex by continuing to improve the effectiveness of the libraries' approval plan, the system for automatically adding material to the collection. In 2019 we adjusted the approval plan based on factors such as circulation of print materials, usage of electronic content, subject matter, and publisher information. In 2023 we analyzed the effectiveness of those changes.

In short, the changes appear to be well received by our patrons. Our e-book usage continues to increase, and although we are adding fewer print books than in years past, the books we select are circulating with greater frequency.

The changes made to the approval plan—most notably, the continued shift from print to electronic material in certain subject areas—were informed by direct evidence from our users and reflect changing preferences regarding the kinds of items a modern academic library is expected to contain. Ultimately, this will result in increased access to needed information, fewer books sitting unused on our shelves, and a more efficient use of our valuable physical spaces.

Detecting and Mitigating Deterioration

Acetate film base degradation, more commonly referred to as vinegar syndrome, is a process of decay common in acetate film stored in humid or warm conditions—precisely the conditions that prevail during the summer months in Hoskins Library, where most of our collection of this material is stored. Vinegar syndrome can cause film to warp and shrink, eventually morphing it into an unusable hockey puck. As the film deteriorates, it releases a headache-inducing vinegar-like smell that can sicken people and spread deterioration to items stored nearby.

To protect the health of the collection and the health of library employees, acetate film with vinegar syndrome has been removed from Hoskins Library. Those involved in removing the contaminated film wore masks and other protective gear. The new Library Storage Annex will provide a stable cold, dry climate that will better preserve acetate film.

Identifying Titles for Collective Retention

A critical aspect of maintaining a healthy collection involves identifying and preserving essential materials, especially those not readily available elsewhere. As part of its membership in library groups across the country, UT Libraries has committed to retaining specific titles for perpetual use. Under these partnership arrangements, one library agrees

to keep all the volumes of a given print journal in its holdings; if there are gaps, another library commits to keeping the volumes needed to complete the set. Collaborating in this way, libraries ensure greater access to more content for their users, and individual libraries are better able to maintain diverse collections that meet the needs of their faculty and students.

Recently UT Libraries added to its retention partnerships by identifying and agreeing to retain journals that are no longer owned by any other academic library. The new Library Storage Annex will provide adequate conditions to help us preserve those print issues, which might otherwise be lost to humankind.

Maintaining a healthy academic library collection is an ongoing process. Relying on a data-driven approach that incorporates guidance from subject specialists, we can understand the strengths of our collection and make informed decisions for new selections, deselections, and retention. This approach ensures that what we house in our spaces, including the future Library Storage Annex, are the resources that best serve our academic community and the state of Tennessee.

Q&A With...

THE
NEW AND FORMER CHAIRS
OF THE
JOHN C. HODGES SOCIETY
ADVISORY BOARD



Chandra Harris-McCray

NEW CHAIR

An award-winning chief strategist and architect of marketing and communications blueprints across multimedia, Chandra Harris-McCray has been lifting the voices of those often unseen and unheard since she was a little girl reading Chicago newspapers daily to her father. She joined the University of Illinois Chicago in 2021 as vice chancellor for strategic marketing and communications. Her journalistic roots serve as the foundation for more than 16 years of experience in inaugural and progressive marketing and communications leadership roles at the University of Tennessee System and Foundation and the University of Colorado Boulder.

Her leadership is connected to billion-dollar-plus campaigns optimized by multichannel constituent-focused journeys that are rooted in systems thinking and ingenious collaborative partnerships. Her passion for the power of storytelling, social justice, leadership, and creating legacy is rooted in her doctoral degree, which is focused on race, gender, cultural studies, and philanthropy in higher education administration and leadership. She also holds a master's degree in marketing and communications from UT. Even in the Windy City, she's a tried-and-true Vol for Life.

What motivates you to serve on the board of the John C. Hodges Society?

My motivation, love, and passion for Hodges Library are birthed from me reading daily to my father growing up as a child in an often-deemed “less-than” neighborhood in Chicago. What seemed like a burdensome chore became a practice that bred an even deeper learning and curiosity within me. The sheer reverence for words—and the books that held them—anchored my very being when I eventually learned that my father was illiterate. I was his access to the world, and every word I read served as a bridge for me to walk on, over, and through. My bridges include being a twice alumna of the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, and my master's and doctoral degrees were made possible by books, datasets, digital archives, journals, microforms, periodicals—and let's not forget the lovely on-campus book delivery service and the graduate carrels of Hodges Library. A waymaker, a life giver—that's Hodges Library.

While serving on the board, what have you found most interesting or surprising about the libraries?

The incredible access the library gives to students and the community around it. It is continually deepening this access in extraordinary ways, from the Beauford Delaney Collection and the Clarence Brown Film Festival to the UT Press.

Do you have a special memory of using the libraries at UT, or any library?

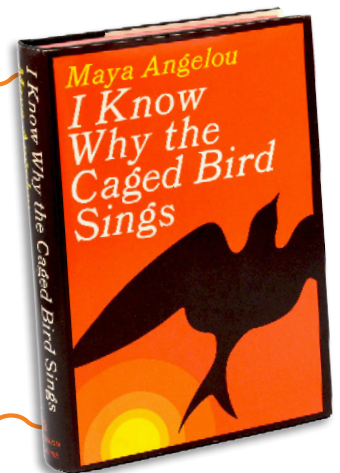
Hodges Library and all its resources became my BFF during my PhD dissertation. It always listened and led me to exactly what I needed, no matter how early or late. And even when it wasn't on the shelf or immediately available in the digital archives, it still led me to the source through the librarians to the massively linked network to millions of other libraries, systems, and organizations. So grateful for the library and my dissertation chair, Professor J. Patrick Biddix.

Do you have a piece of library advice you'd like to pass on to a student?

As much as it is a historical vessel of knowledge, the library is an exquisite embodiment of living. So sit still in it, revel in the awe of the visual exhibits and archives, connect to it through the community it supports beyond campus, and always pick up an actual book and use all of your senses to touch, smell, and read the goodness of what's in between the bounded jacket.

What's the best book you've ever read?

Because there are far too many bests to name, the books that validated me, my story and those of my ancestors leave the greatest imprint still and kindled my voracious love of reading. Those are the classics that I always come back to and re-read over and over: *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* by Maya Angelou; *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee; *Native Son* by Richard Wright; *The Color Purple* by Alice Walker; and anything by James Baldwin or Toni Morrison.



Do you have hobbies unrelated to libraries or reading?

Likely connected to my unending desire to learn, grow, and imagine... I enjoy making and collecting art of all kinds and bird watching.

What's the best thing in your refrigerator right now?

It's not food, but rather the intentional organization of storage containers and such that bring me sheer delight upon opening the refrigerator.



Paul James FORMER CHAIR

I grew up in the UK before moving to the United States in 1996. I've long worked in the nonprofit sector, first with the University of Derby back home then with CARE-USA in Atlanta and New York City, before moving to Knoxville about 20 years ago. I worked at Ijams Nature Center for 16 years, including a dozen years as executive director. For the past six years I have been the director of publishing and development for the Knoxville History Project, which has a mission to research, preserve, and promote the history and culture of the city. I live in the Rocky Hill area with my wife, Meredith, and my daughter, Isabel, who is studying at Montana State University.

What motivates you to serve on the board of the John C. Hodges Society?

About 12 years ago, after writing a book on the Ijams family, I helped the family find a home for their historical photographs at Hodges Library. I've also done research at Hodges on the early days of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park and appreciate its quality collections. The staff are always professional, knowledgeable, and happy to assist. UT Libraries is an amazing cultural resource—it's not just for UT students—including its voluminous archive that is housed in the distinctive ziggurat-styled building on campus. And like a stepped temple or pyramid, it is filled with so many treasures. The vast digital collections online can be enjoyed by anyone, and I use them frequently in my work with the Knoxville History Project. I serve on the board to help promote UT Libraries in the wider community.

While serving on the board, what have you found most interesting or surprising about the libraries?

The number of visitors who walk through the doors of Hodges Library every year is truly remarkable—an estimated 1.3 million—making the library the hive of the campus. The technology and resources available to students there make my own library experiences when I was at college seem like the Dark Ages.

Do you have a special memory of using the libraries at UT, or any library?

When I worked for CARE-USA in New York City in the 1990s, I occasionally went to the New York Public Library on Fifth Avenue to perform research. Step into the vast reading room with the desk lamps, and it's just like you may have seen in films. It's a monumental building, plus the two lion sculptures outside the entrance were made from East Tennessee marble—a nice home connection.

Do you have a piece of library advice you'd like to pass on to a student?

Take the time to explore every floor of Hodges Library. There is always something interesting to see on display in Special Collections and the adjoining exhibit area. Plus, on every floor, there are wonderful photographs, including my favorite collection of Jim Thompson and Dutch Roth photos up on the sixth floor of the early days of the Smokies, before it became a national park.

What's the best book you've ever read?

For sheer enjoyment, it is probably *Treasure Island* (1883) by Robert Louis Stevenson. It starts brilliantly in an old inn by an English cove with young Jim Hawkins and a colorful and crusty sea captain and his talk of buried treasure, one-legged sailors, and chants of "Fifteen men on a dead man's chest" and "Yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum!" Classic stuff. After the captain receives the "black spot" from one of his old crewmates and keels over, the inn boy Jim soon finds his treasure map and before long is on the high seas in a swashbuckling adventure full of memorable characters—not least Long John Silver and his parrot—that never lets up. Some of the nautical references in the book can be a bit puzzling, but it's a magical read.

What's the best movie you've ever seen?

I never tire of *Jaws* (1975). It's a gripping story, well acted and well paced, and the shark is still chilling. So many memorable scenes, including the now-famous USS *Indianapolis* speech by grizzled seaman Quint. Curiously, that real-life story has a local connection in that several men from Knoxville perished on the vessel, which was torpedoed at the end of WWII, including local dentist and painter Earl O. Henry, who was also a local birdwatcher with Harry Ijams. You can see Henry's painting of a red-tailed hawk among the Knoxville History Project's Downtown Art Wrap series on Main Street. Many of the crew who didn't go down immediately with the *Indianapolis* were preyed upon by sharks on the open sea. It was a terrible tragedy, and that short yet poignant scene grounds the entire movie. *Jaws* is also one of those rare instances where the film is far better than Peter Benchley's original best-seller. Runner-up: the mind-bending *Interstellar* (2013).



Do you have hobbies unrelated to libraries or reading?

I still love buying vinyl records. As a teenager I had a reputation for always coming home with a bagful of records. I didn't go in record shops to "smell the vinyl," as Morrissey famously quipped. But there must have been at least 10 shops in town back then that sold vinyl, and I would traipse round them all to find the best prices. To me, playing records is an endlessly satisfying experience. Plus, memorable LP covers, like David Bowie's *Diamond Dogs*, can be artworks themselves. I also enjoy reading, hiking, and visiting art and natural history museums, wherever they are.

What's the best thing in your refrigerator right now?

The bread rolls or baps that I bake myself. Right out of the oven, particularly, they feel and taste quite like the ones I can get back home in Derby, England, from an amazing local bakery called Birds Bakery.



Outreach and Impact through Philanthropy

BY STACY PALADO

UT's libraries provide some of the most interdisciplinary and collaborative spaces on campus. Students meet up for team projects at all hours of the day and night, subject librarians are on hand—in person and virtually—to provide research assistance to professors and students, and electronic and physical resources are available in subjects from accounting to zoology. The contributions of our generous donors strengthen our impact both on and off campus.

One of the most popular ways donors choose to support the library is by creating an endowment or making a gift to help build and maintain the vast collection of scholarly materials we provide for the university and the general public. There are many less obvious ways, however, that our generous supporters are making an impact at UT Libraries.

One exciting example began in the fall of 2023 with the hiring of Katrina Stack. Stack was selected to serve as the Beauford Delaney Graduate Research Fellow in the Betsey B. Creekmore Special Collections and University Archives. This prestigious fellowship was made possible through a grant from the Henry S. Luce Foundation's American Art grant program, which supports collaborative projects that promote the work of artists from underrepresented communities. (The Beauford Delaney Papers were purchased thanks to contributions from Jim and Natalie Haslam, Steve and Ann Bailey, UT's Office of the Provost and Office of the Chancellor, and numerous other library supporters.)

The Luce grant will allow Stack to dig deeply into the personal papers of Knoxville-born African American artist Beauford Delaney. The two-year fellowship will enable her to describe and add context to Delaney's papers through her research within Special Collections, as well as by cross-referencing holdings at the Ewing Gallery, the Beck Cultural Exchange Center, and the Knoxville Museum of Art. Stack will have the opportunity to collaborate and learn from faculty within UT at the libraries, the School of Art, and the Humanities Center, and outside of UT at the Beck

and KMA. She will even be able to consult with Delaney experts in Paris, where the artist spent much of his career.

Senior Associate Dean of Libraries Holly Mercer says, "The Henry Luce Foundation grant provides practical research experience while Katrina finishes her dissertation. She will work with our cultural heritage partners in Knoxville to tell the story of Beauford Delaney through art, archives, and artifacts. Katrina's background in heritage interpretation and museum studies will benefit Special Collections as we work

From left: Associate Dean of Libraries Teresa Braden Walker, Walker's husband, Ben, and former Executive Associate Dean Rita Hoyt Smith



to create an exhibit of the Beauford Delaney Papers that contextualizes Delaney's life and work."

A second example of collaboration is a bit closer to home, particularly for me. Many of you are likely familiar with Associate Dean Teresa Braden Walker and former Executive Associate Dean Rita Hoyt Smith. Walker began her journey with UT as an undergraduate student in 1990. She went on to earn her master's in information sciences, then promptly began working at the libraries and loved it so much she never left.

Walker oversees a number of UT Libraries departments: Arts and Humanities, Community Learning and Engagement, DeVine Music Library, Health and Wellness, Immersive Technologies and Spaces, Marketing and Communications, Pendergrass Agriculture and Veterinary Medicine Library, Public Services, and

Teaching and Learning Programs. She says, "I can't imagine a better place on campus to work than UT Libraries. Everyone wants to be here—from undergraduate and graduate students to professors and community researchers. For all disciplines, for all skill levels, we are here to empower creativity and learning!"

Smith joined UT Libraries in 1976 as a reference librarian. She went on to serve as head of reference and instructional services before retiring as executive associate dean in 2018. Even in retirement, she can often be found in Hodges Library—researching, reading, or volunteering her time in Special Collections.

Smith and Walker share a passion for UT's students and the outreach programs that the libraries facilitate annually—everything from Big Orange

STEM Saturdays, which expose middle and high school students to career opportunities, to DeStress for Success, which encourages university students to counterbalance exam prep with personal well-being. This love of students spurred the two longtime librarians to create the Braden and Hoyt Families' Student Engagement and Outreach Endowment. The endowment was fully funded in late 2023, and funds can be requested by any UT Libraries faculty or staff member to support library-related programming for undergraduate and graduate students as well as outreach activities for K-12 and community college students. Others can make gifts to the endowment as well.

To learn more about either project or how you can make an impact with your gift to UT Libraries, please do not hesitate to contact me at spalado@utk.edu or 865-974-0055. Together we can do amazing things.

Thank you to every person and organization that made a donation to the University of Tennessee Libraries this past year. Whether you are an employee who faithfully contributed five dollars a month through payroll deduction, a new supporter who just made your first gift, or a UT retiree who created a named endowment in honor of a loved one,

your gift is meaningful.

To allow space for more storytelling, we have chosen not to print a donor roll. We will instead put our efforts into creating more meaningful experiences such as the addition of an annual Dean's Circle beginning in 2024. A list of endowments and a roll with the names of donors in the Hoskins Circle and Felicia Circle are available on the libraries' website.

LIB.UTK.EDU/SOCIETY

Out, Damned Scot!¹



Scot Danforth holding one of his favorite UT Press acquisitions (Photo by Shelly O'Barr, UT Libraries)

BY STAFF OF THE UNIVERSITY OF
TENNESSEE PRESS

Scot Danforth was there the night in 2007 that Mister Satan broke out of the nursing home for a book signing and evening of music at Preservation Pub. A few years later, Danforth married a Methodist minister—a move that marked a shift in his life and the life of his coworkers. No longer married only to his job, the softer side of him seemed to win out. (Mister Satan—if you're wondering—was Sterling Magee, one-half of the blues duo Satan and Adam. Mister Satan's career was suspended for several years when he suffered a nervous breakdown and was confined to a nursing home. The other half of the team was Adam Gussow, who is both a blues harmonica player and a historian of the blues. The University of Tennessee Press published his 2007 anthology *Journeyman's Road: Modern Blues Lives from Faulkner's Mississippi to Post-9/11 New York.*)

Early in his career, Danforth had a near miss with the PhD program in philosophy at Vanderbilt University. Upon learning from his would-be advisor that he had been admitted to the program with a full ride for funding, Danforth said, "Well, I guess I should quit my job." The professor asked, "You have a job? Do you like your job?" Danforth said, "Yes, I really do like it." The professor then suggested that he could come to Vanderbilt if he wanted—but advised Danforth to turn down the offer and keep his job, because he'd never find employment as a philosophy professor.

The fourth director of the University of Tennessee Press, Danforth is the third

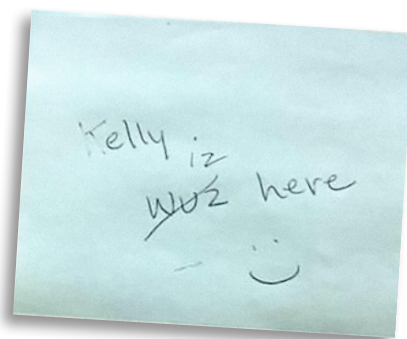
¹ With apologies to the Bard
(see *Macbeth* 5.1.26–40)

longtime director. He began work with the press on April Fool's Day in 1994 after five years as a copy editor at the University of Arkansas Press, where he worked with Miller Williams (father of musician Lucinda Williams). He began as director of the press on July 1, 2008, just in time to shepherd the press through the economic downturn (and, later, through a global pandemic). He is set to retire March 31, 2024, bringing his tenure at UT Press to a close at an even 30 years.

Under his direction, the press has produced many award-winning books, and his easygoing demeanor and warm, self-deprecating humor have endeared him to his colleagues. Stephanie Thompson, now production coordinator, recalls the joy with which Danforth relayed the news of having received a great cover photograph for the forthcoming book *Shelby Foote and the Art of History*. At the time she was an intern, and was impressed by how he treated her as one of the team. This interaction, she notes, is a microcosm of Danforth's leadership style. Per her observation: "Danforth is terrifically smart but doesn't ever make you feel less so; he has an obvious love and contagious enthusiasm for our books and authors; he is a kind and thoughtful person who is inclusive of everyone."

Tom Post, former marketing manager, tells of Danforth's willingness to break from tradition, recounting the tale of a Thanksgiving potluck featuring barbecue and a documentary on Jesco the Dancing Outlaw.

Graphic designer Kelly Gray tells of how she wrote "Kelly wuz here" on a Post-it note on her office door when she left for the University of Illinois Press. When she came back to UT Press, she found the same note on her door—Scot had scratched out "wuz" to replace it with "iz" and added a smiley face.



Jon Boggs, copyediting coordinator, was nervous about starting with the press, as he was still recovering from the singular stresses of corporate start-up culture at his previous job. He explains of Danforth, "It's not just that he expects you to be an adult and handle your own workload; he

gets viscerally uncomfortable around people who pathologically tell on themselves. Like, he gets visibly anxious and irritated as if to say, 'Why can't this guy play it cool?'"

Post took the opportunity to disabuse Boggs of his idealized portrait of the good director. "Oh, he wasn't always that way," Post said with a singed sort of chortle. The man he described, then an acquisitions editor, would work long hours and quietly fume about his colleagues' incessant sentimental ploys for more time on weekends and holidays. "That was Scot before Dawn," Post revealed. "When she came along, everything changed."

As Danforth's retirement nears, Dawn, his wife, is excited to spend more time with the man who she says makes her laugh harder than anyone she's ever known. She dreams of a time when he no longer has to go spend the day with his press family and she gets to have him all to herself. "I can't wait for that day to come!" His press family, on the other hand, will miss him terribly, and hopes he'll at least drop by for a visit every so often. Whether he leaves a lasting legacy on the press is fairly clear. As the Wizard of Oz said, "A heart is shown not by how much you love, but by how much you are loved by others."

Collected Quotes from Scot Danforth

"Webster's 9th I thought was perfect."

"She failed to suck."
—honoring the tenure
of marketing assistant
Linsey Perry

"We'll squeeze that rat down the snake one way or another."

"Nothing says boring like a third of the book being notes."

"If you need help, I'll be under my desk."

"There's never been so much horses**t forced between two covers."

—referring to
<unnamed book>





King
mas



View of Alice Ijam's garden in winter, c. 1930-1939 (Knoxville Garden Slides, University of Tennessee Libraries)